

## Chronic fatigue syndrome – a patient-centered approach

Campbell Murdoch and Harriet Denz-Penhey

*Chronic fatigue syndrome, a patient-centered approach* written by Campbell Murdoch and Harriet Denz-Penhey<sup>1</sup> is a great book.

Part of a series of 'patient-centred' books, this one explains loudly and clearly what patient-centred means. Throughout the book, every opportunity is taken to define patient-centredness, and to contrast this with disease- or doctor-centredness. The value of patient-centredness is demonstrated using the Advanced Trauma Life Support philosophy:

- treat the greatest threat to life first;
- don't let lack of a definitive diagnosis impede the application of an indicated treatment;
- a detailed history is not necessary to begin the evaluation.

Arguing quietly but soundly, the case is presented for acceptance of chronic fatigue syndrome as an appropriate and useful clinical label. Research on causation and treatment are explored, as are the limitations of our concepts of causation. In the absence of a medically sound cause, we are warned of the dangers and possible harm from assigning an inappropriate cause, viral, physical or psychological.

The writing is superb. The arguments are expounded with refreshing clarity. The combination of hard facts and a thorough review of the doctor's attitude and consultation style will help foster a new and liberating way of helping the patient with chronic fatigue syndrome.

Are you '*a cookbook doctor or a medical intellectual with a supple and open mind*'? This book will help you to know, and offers practical advice on how to be either!

*Reviewed by Andrew Divett*

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### Reference

1. Murdoch C and Denz-Penhey H. *Chronic fatigue syndrome: a patient-centered approach*. Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd, Oxon, UK, 2002.